

Trafford's Core Strategy
Opening Statement by Trafford Council

28 February 2011.

The following statement will be delivered by the Council at the opening of the Hearing in response to the Inspector's request.

Welcome

Good Morning,

On behalf of Trafford Council I would like to welcome all participants to this independent Examination into Trafford's Core Strategy.

My name is Dennis Smith and I am the Head of Strategic Planning & Housing Services.

The purpose of this opening statement is to provide a very brief overview of the Authority's Core Strategy and to set the scene for the examination hearing sessions that will take place over the next 2 weeks.

The Core Strategy is a key document for the Council and its partners, setting out the spatial dimensions of our work. It is the first document to be prepared by the authority as part of the Local Development Framework.

Trafford in Context

Trafford is one of 10 metropolitan districts that make up Greater Manchester. Within Greater Manchester we share boundaries with Salford and Manchester and also with Cheshire East and Warrington. Trafford is one of the main economic drivers in Greater Manchester and will make an important contribution to the growth of the Manchester City Region.

The Core Strategy recognises the borough's important interrelationship with neighbouring authorities and the Regional Centre. It is our view that a

successful Trafford is integral to the growth of Greater Manchester and it is crucial to the region's economy and its continued prosperity. Trafford has a clear local vision, articulated through our strong partnership of public, private, voluntary, community and faith organisations set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy, "Trafford Vision 2021: A blueprint".

Trafford is a borough of contrasts; whilst it has economic and housing growth ambitions - it also has employment regeneration and housing needs. The Core Strategy details that these can both be addressed.

Trafford is a relatively small but intensively populated and used borough constrained in terms of the availability of new land for development. The borough has 4 major town centres at Altrincham, Stretford, Urmston and Sale as well the retail and leisure facilities at the Trafford Centre. It has a tightly-drawn Green Belt in the southern and middle parts of the Borough. Across the northern part of the borough large areas of established housing areas exist alongside extensive but well used industrial areas relating to Trafford Park.

The main opportunities in Trafford that exist (other than recycling existing housing or employment land) are in bringing a greater mix of uses (including residential) to the employment areas around Trafford Park and the Regional Centre and in reusing the derelict industrial land in and around Carrington. This approach means that new development will be concentrated mostly in the borough's urban areas (outside green belt or protected open land designations).

Within this context, the Core Strategy details how we expect Trafford to grow in the future, through to 2026 and beyond, and sets out the planning policies that will be used to help to deliver these aspirations and objectives. The document being considered is the result of reviews of policy documents, evidence assembly and analysis, consideration of alternative options, a sustainability appraisal and extensive public consultation.

The Core Strategy

The Core Strategy goes beyond traditional land use planning and brings together policies for the development and use of land with other measures that influence the character and function of the Borough as a whole. It considers the interrelationship between social inclusion, protecting and enhancing the environment and economic prosperity in embracing sustainable development as a core principle.

The Authority believes it has submitted a Core Strategy which is 'sound'. We set out at the Pre-Hearing Meeting in our response to the Inspector's legal compliance questions that we consider that the Core Strategy has been prepared in accordance with the legal and procedural requirements, including those relating to publicity and public engagement.

We consider that the Core Strategy is consistent with a range of other plans at the national and local level, including the Government's planning policy statements and guidance notes; and the Trafford's Sustainable Community Strategy.

We also consider that the Core Strategy is based on robust local evidence, including an assessment of the economic viability of the proposed affordable housing policies, and has been subject to an independent Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment.

Examination.

This Examination represents an opportunity for us to explain the reasoning that has gone into shaping the strategy. Over the next 2 weeks the Examination will explore the strategy in depth, and each day will bring a focus on different elements of the plan.

Whilst inevitably we will get into points of detail during the Examination it is hoped that participants keep in mind the overall vision and strategy for the borough that the Core Strategy provides, set within the context of the growth of the Manchester City Region.

As will be discussed in Session 1 of the hearing, the Authority considers that the Core Strategy is sufficiently spatial in nature and will provide a strategic framework for the preparation of more detailed planning guidance, including a Land Allocations Development Plan Document and a Carrington Area Action Plan.

The Local Infrastructure Plan supporting the delivery of the Core Strategy demonstrates that the proposals in the Core Strategy are deliverable and that there are clear mechanisms for implementation and monitoring.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is our view that the Core Strategy addresses the key planning issues in Trafford, and sets out a clear and locally distinctive Spatial Vision for the future development of the Borough. The Authority is firmly of the view that it has submitted a 'sound' Core Strategy and welcomes the independent examination of the document.

We, and other members of the team representing the Authority look forward to the discussion generated in the hearing sessions.

Dennis Smith
Head of Strategic Planning & Housing Services
Trafford Council.

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